

What is claimed is:

1 ~~1~~ A container manager, comprising:
2 a housing comprised of a plurality of sidewalls bearing a removable lid, forming a
3 container having a closed interior while said lid is in complete engagement with said housing, and
4 providing an open interior able to removably receive items within said open interior while said lid
5 is dislodged from said complete engagement;
6 a port borne by said housing and exposed through said housing to accommodate
7 conduction of transmission of data signals between said closed interior and an environment external
8 to said housing;
9 a control stage comprised of a memory storing information specific to said container,
10 said control stage being mounted entirely within and being completely encased by said container
11 during said complete engagement, and being operationally coupled to provide communication with
12 said interior via said port, and generating a control signal in dependence upon disposition of said port
13 relative to a source of said data signals, in dependence upon disposition of said container within a
14 scheme for generation of said data signals, and in response to occurrence of a coincidence between
15 a data key received among said data signals via said port and a data sequence obtained by said
16 control stage in dependence upon said information stored within said memory; and
17 a moveable latch disposed to engage said lid and hinder removal of said lid from said
18 complete engagement, and to respond to said control signal by releasing said lid from said complete
19 engagement.

1 2. The container manager of claim 1, further comprised of a socket mounted within said
2 housing providing said port.

1 3. The container manager of claim 1, further comprised of an infrared receiver mounted
2 within said housing providing said port.

1 4. The container manager of claim 1, further comprised of an antenna mounted within
2 said housing providing said port.

1 5. The container manager of claim 1, further comprised of:
2 a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
3 said port, generating said data key; and
4 a data cable coupling said host computer to said port.

1 6. The container manager of claim 1, further comprised of:
2 a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
3 said port, generating said data key; and
4 a local area network coupling said host computer to said port.

1 7. The container manager of claim 1, further comprised of:

2 a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
3 said port, generating said data key;

4 said port comprising a first antenna mounted on one of said sidewalls;

5 a data transceiver connecting said first antenna and said controller; and

6 a second antenna driven by said host computer, operationally connecting said host
7 computer to said first antenna.

1 8. The container manager of claim 1, further comprised of:

2 a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
3 said port, generating said data key;

4 an infrared transmitter driven by said host computer to broadcast an infrared signal
5 corresponding to said data key; and

6 an infrared receiver mounted in one of said sidewalls, disposed to receive said data
key from said infrared transmitter.

1 9. The container manager of claim 1, further comprised of:

2 a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
3 said port, generating said data key;

4 a first infrared transmitter and receiver driven by said host computer to broadcast an
5 infrared signal corresponding to said data key; and

6 a second infrared transmitter and receiver mounted in one of said sidewalls, disposed

7 to receive said data key from said infrared transmitter, and to transmit operational communications
8 from said controller to said host computer via said first infrared transmitter and receiver.

1 10. The container manager of claim 1, further comprised of:
2 said controller generating an alarm signal in response to an unauthorized interruption
3 of said communication via said port; and
4 an alarm driven by said controller to broadcast an indication of said unauthorized
5 interruption in response to said alarm signal.

6 11. The container manager of claim 1, further comprised of:
a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
said port, periodically making a determination of whether said an unauthorized interruption of said
communication has occurred; and
an alarm driven by said host computer to broadcast an indication of said unauthorized
interruption in dependence upon said determination.

1 12. The container manager of claim 1, further comprised of:
2 said controller generating an alarm signal in response to an unauthorized interruption
3 of said communication via said port;
4 a first alarm driven by said host computer to broadcast an indication of said
5 unauthorized interruption in response to said alarm signal;

6 a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
7 said port, periodically making a determination of whether said an unauthorized interruption of said
8 communication has occurred; and

9 a second alarm driven by said host computer to broadcast an indication of said
10 unauthorized interruption in dependence upon said determination.

1 13. A container manager, comprising:

2 a housing comprised of a plurality of sidewalls bearing a removable lid, forming a
3 container having a closed interior while said lid is in complete engagement with said housing, and
4 providing an open interior able to removably receive items within said open interior while said lid
5 is dislodged from said complete engagement;

6 a port mounted within said housing and exposed through said housing to receive data
7 signals;

8 a control stage comprised of a memory storing information specific to said container,
9 said control stage being mounted entirely within said container, being completely encased by said
10 container during said complete engagement, and being operationally coupled to provide
11 communication by data signals with said interior via said port, and generating an alarm signal in
12 response to an unauthorized interruption of said communication via said port; and

13 an alarm driven by said controller to broadcast an indication of said unauthorized
14 interruption in response to said alarm signal.

1 14. The container manager of claim 13, further comprised of a socket mounted within
2 said housing providing said port.

1 15. The container manager of claim 13, further comprised of an infrared receiver
2 mounted within said housing providing said port.

1 16. The container manager of claim 13, further comprised of an antenna mounted within
2 said housing providing said port.

1 17. The container manager of claim 13, further comprised of:
2 a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
3 said port, generating said data signals; and
4 a data cable coupling said host computer to said port while conveying said data
5 signals to said controller via said port.

1 18. The container manager of claim 13, further comprised of:
2 a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
3 said port, generating said data signals; and
4 a local area network coupling said host computer to said port while conveying said
5 data signals to said controller via said port.

1 19. The container manager of claim 13, further comprised of:
2 a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
3 said port, generating said data signals;
4 said port comprising a first antenna mounted on one of said sidewalls;
5 a data transceiver connecting said first antenna and said controller; and
6 a second antenna driven by said host computer, operationally connecting said host
7 computer to said first antenna while conveying said data signals to said controller via said first
8 antenna.

20. The container manager of claim 13, further comprised of:
a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
said port, generating said data signals;
an infrared transmitter driven by said host computer to broadcast an infrared signal
corresponding to said data signals; and
an infrared receiver mounted in one of said sidewalls, disposed to receive and convey
to said controller said data signals from said infrared transmitter.

21. The container manager of claim 13, further comprised of:
a microprocessor based host computer operationally coupled to said controller via
said port, generating said data key;
a first infrared transmitter and receiver driven by said host computer to broadcast an

5 infrared signal corresponding to said data key; and

6 a second infrared transmitter and receiver mounted in one of said sidewalls, disposed
7 to receive said data key from said infrared transmitter, and to transmit operational communications
8 from said controller to said host computer via said first infrared transmitter and receiver.

1 22. The container manager of claim 14, further comprised of:

2 said controller generating a control signal in response to occurrence of a coincidence
3 between a data key received via said port and a data sequence obtained by said control stage in
4 dependence upon information stored within said memory; and

5 an electromechanical latch responding to said control signal by hindering removal of
6 said lid from said complete engagement.

7 23. A container manager, comprising:

8 a housing comprised of a plurality of sidewalls bearing a removable lid, forming a
9 container having a closed interior while said lid is in complete engagement with said housing, and
providing an open interior able to removably receive items within said open interior while said lid
is dislodged from said complete engagement;

a port exposed through one of said sidewalls to receive data signals;

a control stage comprised of a memory, said control stage being mounted on said
container and being operationally coupled to provide communication with said interior via said port,
and generating a control signal in response to occurrence of a coincidence between a data key

10 received among said data signals via said port and a data sequence obtained by said control stage in
11 dependence upon information stored within said memory;

12 a microprocessor based host computer sited externally to said container, said host
13 computer comprising a keyboard initiating formation of said data signals and a monitor driven by
14 said host computer to visually display video images, said host computer being operationally coupled
15 to said port and participating in said communication by generating said data signals; and

16 an electromechanical latch disposed to engage said lid and hinder removal of said lid
17 from said complete engagement, and to respond to said control signal by releasing said lid from said
18 complete engagement.

24. The container manager of claim 23, further comprised of a data cable coupling said
host computer to said port.

25. The container manager of claim 24, further comprised of a local area network
coupling said host computer to said port.

26. The container manager of claim 25, further comprised of:
said port comprising a first antenna mounted on one of said sidewalls;
a data transceiver connecting said first antenna and said controller; and
a second antenna driven by said host computer, operationally connecting said host
computer to said first antenna.

1 27. The container manager of claim 26, further comprised of:
2 an infrared transmitter driven by said host computer to broadcast an infrared signal
3 corresponding to said data key; and
4 an infrared receiver mounted in one of said sidewalls, disposed to receive said data
5 key from said infrared transmitter.

1 28. The container manager of claim 27, further comprised of:
2 a first infrared transmitter and receiver driven by said host computer to broadcast an
3 infrared signal corresponding to said data key; and
4 a second infrared transmitter and receiver mounted in one of said sidewalls, disposed
5 to receive said data key from said infrared transmitter, and to transmit operational communications
6 from said controller to said host computer via said first infrared transmitter and receiver.

1 29. A container manager, comprising:
2 a housing comprised of a plurality of sidewalls bearing a removable lid, forming a
3 container having a closed interior while said lid is in complete engagement with said housing, said
4 housing providing an open interior able to removably receive items within said open interior while
5 said lid is dislodged from said complete engagement;
6 a port exposed through said housing to receive data signals;
7 a control stage comprised of a memory, said control stage being mounted on said

8 container and being operationally coupled to provide communication by data signals with said
9 interior via said port;

10 a microprocessor based host computer sited externally to said container, said host
11 computer comprising a keyboard initiating formation of said data signals and a monitor driven by
12 said host computer to visually display video images, said host computer being operationally coupled
13 to said port and participating in said communication by generating said data signals; and

14 an alarm driven in response to an unauthorized interruption of said communication
15 via said port to broadcast an indication of said unauthorized interruption in response to said alarm
16 signal.

30. The container manager of claim 29, further comprised of:
said controller generating an alarm signal in response to an unauthorized interruption
of said communication via said port; and
said alarm being driven by said control stage to broadcast an indication of said
unauthorized interruption in response to said alarm signal.

31. The container manager of claim 29, further comprised of
said host computer periodically making a determination while operationally coupled
to said controller via said port, of whether said an unauthorized interruption of said communication
has occurred; and
an alarm driven by said host computer to broadcast an indication of said unauthorized

6 interruption in dependence upon said determination.

1 32. The container manager of claim 29, further comprised of:

2 said controller generating an alarm signal in response to an unauthorized interruption
3 of said communication via said port;

4 a first alarm driven by said host computer to broadcast an indication of said
5 unauthorized interruption in response to said alarm signal;

6 said host computer periodically making a determination while operationally coupled
to said controller via said port, of whether said an unauthorized interruption of said communication
has occurred; and

7 a second alarm driven by said host computer to broadcast an indication of said
8 unauthorized interruption in dependence upon said determination.

9 33. The container manager of claim 29, further comprised of:

10 said data signals exhibiting a first wavelength, and said data signals exhibiting a
11 second and different wavelength carrier signal; and

12 said port being plug coupleable to said control stage, and comprising a receiver stage
13 converting said data signals into input signals exhibiting said second wavelength, and a transmitter
14 stage converting said data signals into output signals exhibiting said first wavelength.

1 35. The container manager of claim 29, with said port comprised of:

2 a first unit that is plug coupleable to said control stage when said data signals received
3 by said port exhibit a first wavelength and said data signals provided by said control stage exhibit
4 a second and different wavelength carrier signal, said first unit comprising a receiver stage
5 converting said data signals received by said port into input signals exhibiting said second
6 wavelength, and a transmitter stage converting said data signals provided by said control stage into
7 output signals exhibiting said first wavelength; and

8 a second unit that is plug coupleable to said control stage and interchangeable with
9 said first unit to provide a data connection between said control stage and said host computer when
10 said data signals received by said port exhibit the same wavelength as said data signals provided by
11 said control stage.

12 36. A container manager, comprising:

13 a housing comprised of a plurality of sidewalls bearing a removable lid, forming a
14 container having a closed interior while said lid is in complete engagement with said housing, and
15 providing an open interior able to removably receive items within said open interior while said lid
16 is dislodged from said complete engagement;

17 a source of an input signal representing a first class of information, mounted upon and
18 borne by said housing;

19 a port borne by said housing and exposed through said housing to accommodate
20 conduction of transmission of data signals through said housing;

a control stage comprised of a memory storing a second class of information specific

11 to said container, said control stage being mounted entirely within and being completely encased by
12 said container during said complete engagement, and being operationally coupled to provide
13 communication with said interior via said port, and generating a control signal in dependence upon
14 disposition of said port relative to an origin of said data signals, in dependence upon said information
15 represented by said input signal, and in response to occurrence of a coincidence between a data key
16 received among said data signals via said port and a data sequence obtained by said control stage in
17 dependence upon said information stored within said memory; and

18 a latch mounted on said housing and disposed to engage said lid and hinder removal
19 of said lid from said complete engagement, and to respond to said control signal by releasing said
20 lid from said complete engagement.

37. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of said source detecting
movement of said lid, and said first class of information indicating said movement.

38. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of said source detecting a
position of said lid, and said first class of information indicating said position.

39. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of said control stage generating
said control signal in response to instructions received by said control stage from said host computer
independently of said disposition of said port, independently of said information represented by said
input signal, and independently of said occurrence of coincidence.

1 40. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of said control stage generating
2 said control signal in dependence of said disposition of said port, in dependence of said information
3 represented by said input signal, in dependence of said occurrence of coincidence, and in response
4 to instructions received by said control stage from a host computer coupled to said port.

1 41. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of said container being
2 transportable between an origin and a destination, and said data key being encoded and being
3 available only at destination.

1 42. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of said container being
2 transportable between an origin and a destination, and said data key being encoded and being
3 transmitted to said port from said origin.

1 43. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of said container being
2 transportable between an origin and a destination, and said data key being encoded and being
3 available only at destination.

1 44. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of a microprocessor based host
2 computer operationally coupled to said controller via said port, generating said data signals.

1 45. The container manager of claim 44, further comprised of said host computer comprising
2 a cellular telephone bearing a graphical user interface.

1 46. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of some or all of said data signals
2 being transmitted across or received one of an Internet and a wide area network.

1 47. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of said data signals comprising
2 one of an e-mail packet and an attachment to an e-mail message.

1 48. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of said information represented
2 by said source comprising a global location of the container, and said control stage generating said
3 control signal in dependence of said disposition of said port, in dependence of said information
4 represented by said input signal, and in dependence of said occurrence of coincidence.

1 49. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of said container being ✓
2 transportable between an origin and a destination, and a user at one of said origin and said
3 destination requests via a network a request for some part of said data key.

1 50. The container manager of claim 36, further comprised of said container being
2 transportable between an origin and a destination, and said second class of information is installed
3 at said origin comprises biometric data matching a person of a human user of said container and said

4 ~~coincidence must be made with biometric data matching said person at said destination.~~

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